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CHINATOWN - THE SOCIOECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF AN URBAN ENCLAVE - ZHOU, M

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relations in families with a disabled member, these would appear most appropriate.

Partially because of the book's interdisciplinary approach, its articles lack a common conceptual focus. Considered as a total product, however, the work provides findings and insights for both scholars and practitioners interested in Puerto Rican children.

Chinatown: The Socioeconomic Potential of an Urban Enclave. By Min Zhou. Philadelphia, Pa.: Temple University Press, 1992. Pp. 275. \$44.95.

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W. Somerset Maugham was of the opinion that a good story requires a beginning, a middle, and an end. Min Zhou's *Chinatown* is a captivating story of East meeting West in greater New York City.

Chinatown begins well. Chapter 1 introduces two arguments that are central to the book. First, Chinese *families* are gradually moving toward assimilation, yet this intergenerational process purportedly does not seriously threaten the future of the New York City enclave. Second, though social and economic arrangements operating in the enclave may appear to be divisive along class lines and exploitative of most women and many men, such arrangements also offer badly needed jobs to newcomers and facilitate the upward mobility of many families via self-employment for adults and higher education for children.

Chapters 2–4 provide an obligatory history of Chinese immigration to the United States. These chapters cover mostly well-worn territory, but they read nicely and it is here that a thread of empathetic understanding that will run through the book first appears. Writing from the perspective of an “insider” is a double-edged sword; it fosters both explication and subjectivity. The book benefits much more from the former than it suffers from the latter. A short section at the end of chapter 4 (pp. 86–88) is essential for understanding economic development in the New York Chinese enclave. The mostly one-way flow of capital from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia has precipitated growth and diversity, but also contributes to the escalation of real estate prices and rents that force small-business operators and residents to relocate.

The middle of Zhou's story is found in chapters 5–8. The first of these chapters provides a wonderful account of post-1965 growth in the New York Chinese enclave. Zhou describes this enclave's economic backbone with an overview of the garment industry, restaurants, retail and wholesale trades, real estate, the jewelry trade, tourism and entertainment, and professional firms. She effectively utilizes her fieldwork and interviews to supplement what would otherwise be a rather detached accounting of business start-ups, wage rates, and real estate prices. Using information

obtained through fieldwork and an interview with “Mr. Zhao” (p. 102), for example, the author is able to explain why Chinese entrepreneurs tend to view ownership of a garment shop as a stepping stone toward a more reliable line of business. Given the rapid growth of Chinese-owned garment shops in New York City, less informed researchers might conclude that achieving ownership of a garment shop is an end in itself. Chapter 5 also describes the duality of the export and protected sectors of the enclave. This account of the macroorganization of the enclave shows how economic development is possible even in times of recession. The author also explains how the duality increases interconnections between the enclave and the outside economy.

Chapters 6 (returns to human capital) and 8 (residential mobility), and to a lesser degree chapter 7, will be familiar to many readers inasmuch as the analyses reported here are similar to those previously reported by Zhou and Logan in the *American Sociological Review* and *Social Forces*. The author’s excellent use of field data assures that all readers will gain much from chapter 7. The chapter focuses on the roles and experiences of women, paying attention to both emotional and practical matters (see “Mrs. Chow,” pp. 177–78). The empathetic quality of *Chinatown* helps the reader understand why both women and men have a stake in minimizing the extent to which a wife’s activities undermine the traditionally dominant position of the husband. This does not imply, however, that most female immigrants are cut from the same bolt of cloth. For instance, while a large part of the female labor force provides cheap wage labor for the garment industry, foreign-born women with marketable educational credentials and reasonable fluency in English tend to avoid the enclave and to seek better opportunities in the mainstream economy. The regression findings that the human capital of women contributes to job status, but not a commensurate return in earnings, supports Zhou’s argument that women provide essential labor to the enclave, but their input is undervalued in comparison with that of men.

Chapter 9 provides a good ending to the story. A main point of the book is that the economic and social accommodations worked out by adults portend the movement of children toward assimilation. This argument is brought to a persuasive conclusion here. The related issue of whether the New York Chinese enclave can persist should the immigration stream dry up is also addressed. Zhou suggests that the enclave may be so well capitalized and diversified that economic and social arrangements might successfully transform away from heavy reliance on cheap wage labor and move into areas where new competitive advantages can be generated. This is an interesting idea, and in the future perhaps the author will be able to address the matter in some detail.

Chinatown is a fine book, yet one important argument is difficult to follow. The repeated theme that ethnic solidarity is important for explaining why “enclave workers often willing[ly] accept exploitation” (p. 115) at the hands of coethnic bosses in hopes of eventually accumulating the capital and work experience needed to move into self-employment,

does not mix well with the equally repeated theme that many immigrants, owing to a lack of useful human capital and poor English skills, have no choice but to take jobs offered by coethnics. It seems to this reader that most of the "solidarity" described in *Chinatown* involves either family-based action of the sort exemplified by the "Lis" (pp. 149, 155–57) or economically rational institutional behavior. (See, e.g., p. 109: Is it ethnic solidarity that makes Chinese banks more likely to offer loans to recent immigrants, or is it that these banks have the unique ability to get borrowers' past credit histories while they are, at the same time, dependent on keeping money circulating in the community to improve their competitiveness with outside banks?) Moreover, Bailey and Wal-dinger ("Primary, Secondary, and Enclave Labor Markets: A Training Systems Approach," *American Sociological Review* 56 [1991]: 432–45) offer a concrete explanation of employer-employee arrangements in the New York Chinese garment trades that points more to rational action than to ethnic solidarity as the primary driving force behind the system of informal job training they observe. By the end of the book, Zhou appears to have mixed views on the subject: "This by no means suggests that immigrant Chinese willingly accept menial jobs, low wages, and long working hours. Rather, they perceive them as a shortcut to their long-term goal, which is to benefit not themselves but their children" (p. 223).

A minor annoyance with *Chinatown* is a tendency toward redundancy. However, the book is excellent for seminars and, since students are likely to have little background in this area, the redundancies may reinforce key points. Min Zhou is to be congratulated for her fine scholarship.

Caribbean New York: Black Immigrants and the Politics of Race. By Philip Kasinitz. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1992. Pp. xv + 280. \$39.95 (cloth); 19.95 (paper).

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Sociologists and policymakers have most often looked to black, Caribbean immigrants in the United States for answers to questions about their success relative to that of black Americans. Often such immigrants have been held up as a "model minority" in comparisons with African-Americans. Otherwise, with only a few exceptions, their immigrant status has been ignored, and they have been analyzed in racial terms. In fact, Roy Simon Bryce Laporte once called them "invisible immigrants." *Caribbean New York* offers an important and welcome break from this tradition.

In this ground-breaking work, Philip Kasinitz provides a community study of West Indian immigrants in New York, which examines them as an ethnic group, an immigrant group, and as a growing politically